

Annual Corporate Evaluation Report 1997

**Evaluation Unit
Corporate Affairs & Initiatives Division**

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All documents mentioned in this report can be obtained from the IDRC library.

Introduction

The Annual Corporate Evaluation (ACE) Report reviews the Centre's progress in measuring program performance, highlights evaluation tools and systems, and summarizes findings from recent evaluations. Past ACE Reports demonstrated the use of IDRC's systems for generating and managing evaluation information, reported on strategic evaluations, and presented IDRC's evaluation links with other organizations. This year's report arrives as the Centre enters a new stage in performance accountability. Greater responsibility has been devolved to the programming units, including the requirement to set and report on progress toward performance targets. All Program Initiative (PI) prospectuses approved by the Board will include a performance framework and a commitment to plan and carry out program monitoring and evaluation. The performance information thus generated will be reflected in future PI progress reports to the Board and feed into assessments of corporate performance carried out by other parts of IDRC. The advent of setting PI targets and reporting on their

progress should facilitate corporate-level performance assessment.

Under IDRC's decentralized system, evaluations are initiated in various parts of the Centre, for a wide variety of project and program specific purposes. Synthesizing evaluation information from these diverse sources enables the Centre to use lessons learned across its various programs to inform strategic discussions at the corporate level. The first section of this year's report is an example of such synthesis, drawing on the results of 52 recent evaluations, analysing their findings on four issues highlighted in IDRC's second Corporate Program Framework (CPF II): research outcomes, research linkages, interdisciplinarity and gender.

The analysis shows that IDRC is very concerned with the outcomes of its research. Evaluations also offer lessons regarding the application of new information and communications technologies. However, the Centre still needs to examine some of its working assumptions and aspects of its approach. Evaluations lack assessments of interdisciplinarity, both in terms of critically appraising its effect on outcomes and on the necessary conditions for its success. They also lack attention to gender issues.

The second section of this report discusses efforts to improve evaluation practice, making it more useful to both IDRC and its Southern partners. The Centre sponsored two workshops and a survey to solicit feedback from partners on how they can institutionalize evaluation and make donor-funded evaluations address their needs. Our partners argued that the project-focus of donor-funded evaluations hinders their ability to assess their corporate performance and that they still lack meaningful participation in evaluations. IDRC's performance in one aspect of this participation, the use of Southern evaluators, appears modestly positive although use of African evaluators appears to be declining. Moreover, the Centre's work in institutional self-assessment reaffirms the value of institutional self-determination in evaluation. Thus, while areas for improvements are indicated, the Centre is addressing some of the concerns raised.

The last section of the 1997 ACE Report provides an update on the corporate evaluation system, showing improved reporting of evaluation allocations. 1996/97 figures show that 1.7% (\$1.2 million) of total program appropriations went to evaluation activities. The report concludes with a list of the 25 reports that were added to the IDRC evaluation inventory over the past year, identifying program areas which might be interested in each report.

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Corporate Performance

Learning from Evaluation Reports

In IDRC's decentralized evaluation system, individual program units decide what activities are evaluated, when, and for what purposes. The strength of this system is that evaluations

are tailored to the specific information needs of each unit. However, because the reports differ in focus, scope, and method, they require additional analysis to reveal generalizable information about corporate performance on issues of Centre-wide importance.

The Evaluation Unit analysed 52 evaluation reports received over the past two years, drawing out feedback on key issues raised in IDRC's second Corporate Program Framework (CPF II): **research outcomes, research linkages, interdisciplinarity, and gender**. We were looking for information on topics that the authors of the reports may not have been asked to address in their terms of reference, but on which it is reasonable to expect some coverage, given the centrality of these issues within IDRC and development circles more broadly. This analysis provides insights into the four issues, and shows how project and program evaluation information can be used to synthesize findings on topics of corporate interest.

The Sample

The 52 reports reviewed show that IDRC evaluation activity tends to be project-focussed; 58% of these evaluations focussed on one or multiple projects (see Table 1). Other types of evaluation are becoming more prevalent. Compared with the inventory of evaluations received since the inception of the Centre, there has been a significant increase in the number of evaluations of networks, from 8% overall to 21% in the last two years. The increase reflects a growing reliance on this mode of program delivery, and a desire to trace its effectiveness in different settings.

The reports show that Centre staff use evaluations to gain feedback on specific issues within their projects; only 9 (17%) could be deemed compliance evaluations (in which the terms of reference simply ask the evaluator to verify that original objectives were met). The most common issues addressed were:

- the types and quality of the results of research projects (48% of the reports);
- critique of the design of the initiative (38%); of these, half relate to networks, particularly dealing with their structures and governance;
- the quality of the research, including methodology, approach, data samples, etc. (27%); and
- project or institutional management (17%).

Table 1. Types of Evaluations Received, 1995-97

Type	Number	%
Single Project		
Multiple	17	33
Project/Program	13	25
Network	11	21
Institutional	5	10
Assessment	6	11
Issue review		
Total	52	100

Key Findings

Table 2 shows the incidence of comments related to research outcomes, research linkages, interdisciplinarity and gender in the 52 reports reviewed. The highlights of our findings on these four issues are described below, and discussed in further detail over the next four pages.

Research Outcomes: 85% of the evaluation reports discussed research outcomes, indicating that IDRC is very concerned with results. The most frequently described outcome is capacity building among individuals and institutions, followed by application of research results and building effective linkages among researchers, institutions, and research users.

Research Linkages: The reports show that a key advantage of research linkages relates to disseminating knowledge and projects still have difficulties sharing knowledge beyond research communities. Also, there is evidence that care should be taken so that new information technologies enhance, not replace, more traditional means of knowledge sharing.

Interdisciplinarity: Despite interdisciplinarity being a key aspect of IDRC's approach to development research, the evaluation reports contained little substantive analysis on the subject. One of the key problems seems to be a lack of conceptual tools and methods to assess interdisciplinarity.

Gender: Evaluation reports offer next to no corporate learning on gender issues. IDRC requested minimal feedback on how well projects succeed in incorporating gender issues into development research, or on what impact projects have on gender relations.

Table 2. Sources of Information (*n* = 52 reports)

Issue	Number	%
Research outcomes	44	85
Research linkages	37	72
Interdisciplinarity	21	40
Gender	17	33

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Research Outcomes

IDRC evaluations focus heavily on results. Of the 52 evaluation reports analysed, 44 (85%) discuss the outcomes of IDRC-supported research (see Table 3). The most common type of outcome reported is capacity building among individuals and institutions (87%); 72% of the evaluations report on the application of research results to policy, as well as to improving standards of living, technical practice or research methodologies; finally, 68% of the reports record the establishment of effective networks or linkages among researchers, institutions, NGOs, and/or government agencies.

Drawing from both positive and negative examples, the reports also provide insight into how to ensure that IDRC-supported research makes a difference for development: (The percent of the 44 reports commenting on the factors below is noted in brackets.)

Table 3. Research outcomes

Type of outcome	Number	%	
Capacity building	38	87	
individual		21	48
institutional		17	39
Application of research results	32	72	
to policy		12	27
other		20	45
Effective network/linkages	30	68	

IDRC's corporate objectives for 1997 to 2000

- *To foster and support the production and application of research results leading to policies and technologies that enhance the lives of people in the developing regions;*
- *To mobilize and strengthen the indigenous research capacity in the countries of those regions, particularly capacity for policies and technologies for more healthy and prosperous societies, food security, biodiversity, and access to information. (CPF II)*

Right Stakeholders: Impact is greatly enhanced when the right stakeholders are involved in the project; evaluations call for the use of more participatory techniques, or for greater coordination and networking with key research users and collaborators during the design and implementation of the research. (25%)

Dissemination: Projects need, yet often lack, a coherent, appropriate and aggressive strategy to disseminate research findings to users. (23%)

Persistence: The Centre should be persistent on two fronts: in supporting research into its utilization phase (10%); and in sticking with institutions or networks until research capacity

is firmly established (10%).

Individuals: Particular individuals may be influential in ensuring or hindering the impact of a research project. Some evaluators praise dedicated and skilled staff, others point to key research personnel championing the research after they assume a position in another organization, while another discusses problems caused by high staff turn-over. One report mentioned that a lack of contact with IDRC personnel hindered the project's success. (15%)

Contextual Factors: Contextual factors must be taken into account, for they can significantly inhibit or facilitate impact. Evaluations described technologies that were irrelevant to the surrounding market because they were too costly or redundant, or research topics that were rendered unimportant by changes in national policy. (13%)

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Research Linkages

Three out of four of the reports (72%) deal with either formal networks or looser arrangements among researchers, institutions, knowledge users, etc. The issues they raise are mainly in the areas of knowledge dissemination and how to make networks effective.

Knowledge Dissemination: The reports raise two key issues regarding knowledge dissemination, one of the primary benefits of research linkages:

1. ***Finding the appropriate mode of dissemination is essential and generally different modes are required to reach the various parties concerned.*** For example, the evaluation of a cattle project in Mexico and Central America found that information sharing occurred only at a scientific level through publications, seminars and symposiums; little was returned to the local producers. Extending access to research results beyond the research community is an essential, but difficult, process.
2. ***In some contexts, traditional means of knowledge diffusion should not be replaced with new information and communication technologies (ICTs).*** An institutional assessment of CODESRIA, a pan-African institute devoted to developing African social science, found that its traditional role as publisher and documentation centre remains vital to researchers because of a dearth of private publishers and limited access to electronic information resources. In this context, ICTs might be less appropriate, given the audience's limited ability to receive information through these new technologies.

Program Strategy

We are establishing the program initiatives as working networks, focussed on particular knowledge gaps and linking participating institutions with other relevant knowledge communities. (CPF II)

Networks: The evaluations provide some guidance on how to build effective networks. The evaluations confirm a recent study's conclusions regarding the key factors that affect the success or failure of a network; these include: flexible and internally-driven management,

diversity of membership, clear and focussed goals, and the ability to adapt to changing circumstances (*IDRC Networks: An Ethnographic Perspective*, Anne Bernard, 1996). Evaluators emphasize that networks need to be structured and actively promoted, they require long-term program support, a committed coordinator, and they demand an appropriate and reliable communication system.

EVIS data on Research Linkages

Evaluation Information System (EVIS) data also reveal positive assessments of IDRC's record in promoting research linkages. Of the 192 reports and sub-reports on EVIS, 127 answered the question, "*Were linkages among national, regional, and/or international researchers enhanced?*" Their conclusions were:

Yes: 67 reports (53%)
No: 23 reports (18%)
Yes/No: 37 reports (29%)*

Only 69 reports addressed the question "*Were linkages between researchers and facilitating or intermediary organizations adequate?*" 70% of the responses were positive:

Yes: 47 (70%)
No: 12 (17%)
Yes/No: 10 (14%)*

* Yes/No denotes that the report cites examples where some linkages were enhanced (or adequate) and others were not.

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Interdisciplinarity

The evaluation reports reviewed provide little input for corporate learning on multi- or interdisciplinarity. The innovative nature of this type of research and high corporate commitment to its promotion suggest a need for corporate monitoring and learning (see CPF quote and *Across Disciplines*, Kapila and Moher, 1995). While Program Officers express satisfaction with the interdisciplinary experience in their activities (see PCR box), the 52 evaluation reports reviewed showed a lack of data and analysis on this subject.

Complex problems must be addressed in a multidisciplinary manner.... The Centre has incorporated a multidisciplinary approach to research support and management in order to reinforce its commitment to environmental sustainability and social equity. (CPF II)

Project Completion Report (PCR) Data on Interdisciplinarity

Program Officers rated 202 projects (from a total of 401 closed PCRs) to be "genuinely inter-disciplinary". Of these, the interdisciplinary experience was assessed as:

Satisfactory in 147 reports (73%)
Unsatisfactory in 15 reports (7%)
No judgement in 40 reports (20%).

IDRC staff seem to be satisfied with the degree of inter-disciplinarity of their projects. However, the PCRs lack critical commentary; most simply note which disciplines were involved.

Fewer than half (40%) of the reports reviewed include some mention of interdisciplinarity. Most of the comments are cursory. Many of the evaluations state that they did not have the means to evaluate interdisciplinarity, indicating a need to make available frameworks and methods to better assess the cost and contribution of the approach. The issues that emerge in the reports suggest a need for exploring some of the assumptions and experience to date:

Improved outcomes: The evaluations contend that a multi- or interdisciplinary approach generally provides better analysis, greater acceptance of research results, and more sustainable impact. They cite a lack of multi- or interdisciplinarity as a factor limiting the impact of the project or inhibiting the achievement of goals.

Cost-benefit: Authors mention that multi- or interdisciplinarity tends to be more costly and that the time frame for yielding results is longer than single disciplinary research. It is generally assumed that the improved research outcomes warrant these additional costs.

Organizational structure and leadership: Organizational structure and leadership appear to be an important determinant of the success of multi- or interdisciplinarity. Although no one model is endorsed, the evaluations converge on the importance of having structures which cut across sectoral lines and inspired leadership which is able to deal with the challenge of bridging gaps between many points of view.

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Gender

IDRC is not requesting information on how well projects succeed in incorporating gender in development research, or on what impact the project has had on gender relations. Except for one report by the Gender and Sustainable Development Unit, the evaluation reports of the last two years lack substantive discussions of gender issues.

It has been over ten years since the establishment of IDRC's Women in Development Unit, and even longer since women's and gender issues have been explicitly incorporated into Centre priorities. However, only one-third of the reports (33%) say anything related to gender at all, or disaggregate data by sex. Only 7 reports (13%) make any recommendations or give an evaluative comment with respect to gender. (See Table 4)

All Centre staff share responsibility to ensure that IDRC-supported research takes into account the differential impact that change will have on the lives of men and women... Efforts will continue to ensure that adequate numbers of women scientists, and scientists sensitive to gender issues, participate in all Centre-supported research and that the impacts of the research on both women and men are fully explored. (CPF II)

Table 4. Comments on Gender in 52 Reports

Type*	Number
No mention	35
Project focussed on women or had a strong gender component, but this wasn't an evaluation issue	3
Counted number of women researchers or trainees	5
Evaluation methodology was sensitive to gender differences in respondents	2
Gender was one in a list of demographic issues	2
Report made recommendations about gender	5
Report made evaluative comment on gender	2

* Two reports fit in two categories, thus the number of citations rises to 19.

attention to hiring practices), but gender issues were rarely evaluated on the level of individual research projects. Eleven of the 17 reports that mention gender or contain sex-disaggregated data are network or institutional assessments. Half of these simply comment on the number of male versus female personnel. Of the project-level evaluations, four on farming systems research note the importance of incorporating gender issues in this type of research, given the gendered division of labour in farming; and two evaluations on information technologies highlight women's difficulties in gaining access to ICTs.

One evaluation from the Gender and Sustainable Development (GSD) Unit assesses the degree to which gender issues are integrated in project design. It concludes that in the abstracts of 70 projects funded by IDRC in 1995-96, only 8 clearly addressed gender relations in the design, methodology, implementation, analysis and evaluation stages of the research.

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Improving Evaluation Practice

Introduction

The Centre has been working on building evaluation into projects for some time and has not been completely satisfied with the results. While Southern institutions comply with and participate in externally initiated evaluations, they appear to derive little benefit from the experience and are not using evaluation tools themselves to improve their performance and viability. Over the past two years, the Evaluation Unit has explored this problem relative to IDRC on three fronts.

First, **Southern perspectives on institutionalizing the evaluation function** were elicited in two workshops with recipient institutions and a survey of recipients and donors. The results confirmed that evaluation is valued as a learning tool and skills are available. Although evaluation is universally viewed as important, recipients are very aware that they are still not adequately involved when evaluations are designed and carried out. Evaluations sponsored by donors are perceived as project-focussed and, sometimes detrimental to overall institutional performance.

Second, how well does IDRC facilitate Southern participation in one aspect of evaluation - hiring evaluators? **A profile of who IDRC has used as evaluators** shows that 57% of the authors of evaluation reports are from the South; and that 75% of IDRC evaluation teams include Southern participation.

And third, with IDRC support, four Southern research institutions implemented and documented their experiences with **institutional self-assessment**, using a framework that the Centre developed two years ago. These cases show the value of assessing performance at the institutional level and suggest ways of enhancing the process. Supporting institutional self-

assessment responds directly to concerns raised in the workshops and survey about donors being too project-focussed.

The following provides highlights of these activities and studies.

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Southern Perspectives

To find out what the Centre's partners consider the necessary conditions for enhancing benefits from evaluation, the Evaluation Unit organized two workshops (in India and Kenya), and commissioned a survey of recipients and donors on the use of evaluation results. The message was clear: donors must collaborate more effectively with Southern partners to make evaluation more useful to both parties. Partners perceive a clear relevance of evaluation to institutional strengthening and want to do more with evaluation than simply comply with donor needs. They perceive a need for donor support to move in this direction.

Donors and recipients view the gains from evaluation differently. While recipient organizations see evaluation as an opportunity to reflect on their overall program, donors are primarily concerned with their funded activities. This divergence is detrimental to organizations which deal with a number of different donors with differing evaluation demands. And while many organizations have internal review mechanisms, there is limited use of these at institutional decision-making levels. Recipients are keen to develop mechanisms which enhance the relevance of the internal mechanisms already in place and which focus donor evaluations within the context of the organization's overall goals.

Management has to make a commitment to evaluation and take steps to implement it.... Evaluation has to be portrayed as necessary for self-improvement rather than in its traditional role of... policing. (Kenya workshop)

Donor-funded evaluations are too project-centred. Donor-funded evaluations usually fail to make recommendations on strengthening the institutional context within which their projects are implemented. Instead, donors generally view evaluation as a way of ensuring accountability and improving project management for the projects they support.

Donor-funded evaluations are primarily managed by donors with little participation from the recipient organization (Table 5). As a result, recipients have limited commitment to the utilization of study results. While greater participation from recipient organizations is desirable, the costs and constraints to starting participatory evaluations are: recipient unpreparedness, resource requirements, shortage of experts and facilitators, and lack of donor support for the concept.

Table 5. Degree of Recipient Participation in Donor Funded Evaluations

Evaluation Stage	Degree of Participation		
	Hi	Med	Lo
<i>Planning Stage</i>			
Identification of issues to be studied		×	
Formulation of terms of reference			×
Choice of consultants			×
Timing of study		×	
Resources to be spent			×
<i>Conduct Stage</i>			
Briefing of consultants		×	
Travel and logistic arrangements	×		
Methodology planning			×
Determining sources of information		×	
Reviewing & interpreting information			×
<i>Reporting Stage</i>			
Debriefing	×		
Draft report		×	
Final report		×	

Workshops:

- *Evaluation as a Tool for Institutional Strengthening*. D. Lee-Smith, Mazingira Institute, 1997.
- *Role of Monitoring and Evaluation in Strategic Management and Organizational Development*. BAIF Development Research Foundation, 1997.
- *Revisiting Evaluation: A Study of the Process, Role and Contribution of Donor Funded Evaluations to Development Organizations in South Asia*. Manjul Bajaj, 1997.

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A Profile of IDRC Evaluators

The Evaluation Unit sponsored a study to gauge the extent to which IDRC hires evaluators from the South, and to identify where the Centre needs to expand its network of contacts with Southern evaluators. The study analyzes trends regarding regional origin, team composition and gender, based on the evaluation reports received by the Unit. It found that IDRC hires a significant percentage of evaluators from the South, confirming that IDRC's Southern-directed and capacity-strengthening approach also applies to evaluation.

57% of the people who wrote evaluations for IDRC are from the South. Moreover, 75% of IDRC evaluation teams include Southern participation. This compares, for example, with USAID which includes Southern country nationals in 40.5% of its evaluation missions and has, in contrast to IDRC, a policy encouraging the inclusion of host nationals on evaluation teams.

Regional Data: Asians constituted the largest group of Southern evaluators (21%), followed by Latin Americans (19%) and Africans (17%). Over time, there have been significant increases in

the number of Asian and Latin American evaluators, but the number of African evaluators dropped from the 1980s to the 1990s. IDRC has hired the largest number of evaluators from Indonesia, Thailand, India, Costa Rica, Colombia and Kenya (three of these countries have or had IDRC regional offices).

Chart 1. Nationalities of evaluators by region
(*n* = 421)

Team Composition: *Asia.* Although IDRC hired no Asian evaluators in the 1970s, they now constitute the largest group of Southerners, especially because they were more likely to work in teams. When compared to other regions, Asian nationals were more likely to be hired to evaluate IDRC-supported initiatives in their region, and the least likely to be sent to other regions to undertake evaluations.

Latin America. The number of Latin Americans hired has risen steadily since the 1970s. 45% of Latin Americans were hired onto teams of 2-3 people. Slightly more than half (53%) of the authors who evaluated IDRC initiatives in Latin America were nationals of that region. 21% of Latin American evaluators were sent outside their own region on IDRC evaluation activities.

Africa. In comparison to funding, initiatives in Africa have not been evaluated as much as those in Latin America and Asia. Although 43% of IDRC's regional spending goes to Africa, only 24% of the evaluations focussed on Africa-based initiatives. Out of the three Southern regions, IDRC hired the fewest African evaluators and they are scattered across 21 different countries. Moreover, in the 1980s, 70% of the evaluations focussed on Africa were evaluated by Africans, but this number has dropped to 37% in the 1990s. In this decade, more Canadian and other Northern evaluators are being sent to evaluate initiatives in Africa.

Gender: A mere 17% of the evaluators hired by IDRC over the past 20 years are women. This percentage has increased since the mid 1980s, but remains at a low 23% in the 1990s.

A Profile of IDRC Evaluators. Tricia Wind. 1997.

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Institutional Self-Assessment

Over the past 18 months, the Centre has supported four institutions in testing an institutional self-assessment methodology, based on the framework developed by IDRC with Universalialia (*Institutional Assessment*, 1995). The Centre worked with the institutions to plan and carry out the self-assessment process (including support for some internally generated and some external review, and facilitators to assist at key points). This process is close to completion. Next steps include helping the institutions deal with the recommendations, and creating a guidebook for other institutions to undertake a self-assessment. Several important points have emerged:

Those inside are not necessarily easier on themselves than an external reviewer would be.

In the three cases completed to date, the organization's leadership has adopted recommendations which fundamentally challenge the governance structures of the organizations. Because these conclusions and recommendations have been drawn from inside the organization, there is a much stronger potential for successful change in structure. In one case, the self-assessment was delayed considerably because of an extensive debate on leadership. The institution and its director allowed the process to unfold, and it resulted in suggestions for change which resonate more strongly throughout the institution than suggestions made in parallel by an external evaluator.

The self-assessment process is most effective when it is de-linked from the project cycle.

The self-assessment process was facilitated by two consultants. Initially, there was some resistance and suspicion that this was simply a different way for the donor to get consultants inside an organization for evaluation purposes, as funding was drawing to a close and new grants were being sought. In one case this was a problem; in another case where the process was completely unrelated to funding cycles and IDRC's project support, the process went more smoothly and was farther reaching.

Self-assessment and external review fulfill different purposes. Both external review and self-assessment are legitimate review processes. External review is needed for accountability for funds received and also for quality control. But without some parallel review processes internal to the organization, external review does not necessarily contribute to institutional strengthening and capacity building. Self-assessment fulfills that need, by providing the mechanism for an organization to look at its own progress and determine what changes should be made. It strengthens an institution's capacity for reflection, a key component of any learning organization, and helps institutions deal on a more equal footing with external stakeholders. This means more negotiation with donors on the design of evaluations,

resulting in a stronger focus on the progress of the organization as a whole rather than the success of the individual project.

CIRDAP: Institutional Assessment, 1996

CEDRES: Auto Evaluation, 1997

CODESRIA: Report of the Auto-Evaluation, 1996

CIRES: not yet complete

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Evaluation Systems

Update

The Centre maintains systems to capture evaluation information. These systems are among the cornerstones for corporate reporting as well as corporate learning. They include:

- evaluation budget reporting
- Project Completion Reports (PCR)
- EVIS, the Evaluation Information System
- the Evaluation Inventory

Highlights

The *PCR software was updated and launched* this summer as a Windows-based program. The new PCR is more user-friendly in entry and retrieval and is in line with upgraded systems at the Centre. It also allows the user to take PCR work on a laptop for the road. (See also PCR below.)

Reporting on budget allocations for evaluation is improving. Last year \$1.2 million were recorded as earmarked for evaluation activities (FY 1996/97).

Status Updates

Evaluation Budget Reporting: *Recorded evaluation allocations based on approved activities have increased from \$524,000 in 1994/95 (0.9% of total appropriations) to almost \$1.2 million in 1996/97 (1.7%).* Preparations for the Auditor General's 1994 audit of IDRC highlighted the need for an improved system to facilitate reporting on evaluation spending in the Centre. The Centre subsequently made adjustments to its system. Two budget categories now track evaluation allocations: 1) projects have a budget line item "evaluation" under which all evaluation-related costs should be itemized; and 2) research support activities (RSAs) have a classification 'evaluations' under the category 'Nature of Activity'.

Project Completion Reports (PCRs): The database now *contains closed reports on 401 projects*. Program Officers are required to complete these reports for projects over \$100,000. The new PCR Windows software is more user-friendly for data entry and retrieval, and PCR data can be quickly tabulated and analyzed through Crystal Reports. PCR Win is found in the Radius folder of Win 95.

Evaluation Information System (EVIS): The database *contains 192 reports, covering 650 projects*. The information is taken from IDRC evaluation reports in response to a standard set of questions. A list of the reports captured in EVIS and which projects they refer to is available on w:\csbdgsi\eval\evis.wb2.

Evaluation Inventory: The inventory *contains 334 reports* as of August 1997. The inventory is the locus of the corporate evaluation memory. All IDRC evaluation reports received by the Evaluation Unit are kept in the inventory. A list is available on w:\csbdgsi\eval\inventor.eva and copies of the reports are available from the Centre library.

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Evaluation Reports Received by the Evaluation Unit, 1996/97

The Evaluation Unit received 25 new evaluation reports this year. The following table provides details of the reports and identifies program areas which may be interested in each (Related Program Areas). Copies of the reports can be obtained from the library.

Title, Author, Date	Related Program Areas	Projects Covered	Country/Region
Project and Program Evaluations			
HEALTHNET: Satellite communications research for development. 1994	EHIP, MI, Learning Systems, Acacia, PAN	91-1043	Africa
An Impact of IDRC-Supported Occupational Health and Safety Projects. Blair Rutherford. 1996	Ecosystem Health, SMMEIT	54 projects from 1979 to 1995 (see report page 55)	Global
Final Evaluation Report: Snow and Ice Hydrology (Pakistan). Joan McArthur-Blair and Marvin Lamoureux. 1997	PLAW, CBNRM, Minga	88-8009	Pakistan
Shelter and Environmental improvement for the urban poor. Michael Leaf. 1996	CBNRM, PLAW, Minga, Cities Feeding People	92-1303	Vietnam
Report on program evaluation of	MI, Learning for	82-4910	Thailand

improvement on nutrition, primary health care and quality of life. Aray Sriburatham, Waraporn Eoaskoon, Prasit Pongruengphant. (n.d.)	Change, Ecosystem Health, EHIP		
Community-Oriented Health Management Information System. Muna Matar. 1996	Acacia, EHIP, Ecosystem Health, PAN, Bellanet	93-0219	Israel
IDRC Young Canadian Researchers in the Field 1991-94. Marianne Wightman. 1997	All	91-1025, 92-1201, 93-1201, 94-1200	Global
Evaluation of the Rural Agroindustry Development Programme (PRODAR). Ed Weber, Bernard Bridier, Raul Fiorentino. 1997	Foodlinks, PLAW, CBNRM, Minga, SMMEIT	91-0113, 90-0112, 92-0025, 95-0016	Latin America, Caribbean
Evaluation of the Economy and Environment Program for South East Asia. Mohan Munasinghe. 1996	Minga, MIMAP, PAN, EEPSEA, PLAW, CBNRM, SUB	95-8001, 92-0419	South East Asia

Network Evaluations

Assessing the Impact of Information and Telecommunication on Policy Formulation. Network of Networks - Latin America. Noel Boissiere. 1996	Acacia, PAN, ASPR, BELLANET	500055/95-0606	Latin America
Evaluation of the African Technology Policy Studies Network. Drs. Daniel Chudnovsky and Lydia Makhubu. 1996	Acacia, ASPR, EEPSEA	92-0418	Africa
TRAMIL - Informe de evaluacion externa. Margarita Oseguera de Ochea. 1996	SUB, CBNRM, Minga, PLAW	94-0020	Central America
On Farmer's Fields: Portrait of a Network. Simon Chater and Virgilio Carangal, IRRI. 1996	Foodlinks, Cities Feeding People, PAN, MI	91-0124	Asia
Evaluation for International Fisheries Research (SIFR). Sten Sverdrup-Jensen. 1995	SIFR, SUB	92-0006	Global
Réseau de recherches sur les politiques industrielles - An External Evaluation of Phases I and II. Prof. Mustapha K. Nabli and Jeffrey C. Fine. 1996	MIMAP, SMMEIT, TEC	94-0406, 93-1351, 88-1025	Francophone Africa
Library and Information Services	Acacia, PAN	92-0609	Global

Network (LISN) - Final assessment report. Ronald Archer. 1995

Evaluation of Networks in Africa: The case of ILCA's Collaborative Activities. Hugo Li Pun, Elke Böhnert, Ian Robinson, Harvey Blackburn, & Sayed Jamal. Revised. 1996	Acacia, PAN, SUB, PLAW, All	95-0009, 90-0185, 88-0263, 88-0108, 88-0025, 84-0028	Africa
An Evaluation of the Fiscal Reform and Structural Change and Labour Flexibility and Productivity Networks. William J. Milne. 1995	MIMAP, Acacia, PAN, Trade	92-1100, 93-1100 (93-4507-06)	Argentina, Mexico Philippines, India

Institutional Assessments

CODESRIA Evaluation 1996. Dr. Herschelle S. Challenor, Clark Atlanta University, and Dr. Aaron Gana. 1997	ASPR, MIMAP, Learning Systems, TEC	95-4806, 88-0249, 92-8150	Africa
Mid-term evaluation of the West Africa Rural Foundation (WARF). Jonathan Otto, Yawo Assigbley, and Abdoulaye Sène. 1996	PLAW, CBNRM, Minga	93-8158	West Africa
CIRDAP - Institutional self-assessment on the Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific. CIRDAP. 1996	MIMAP, All	89-0331, 91-0235, 94-8304	Asia and the Pacific

Issue Reviews

Impact of farming systems research. Proceedings of the final workshop on impact assessment of farming systems research. Kandy, Sri Lanka. ed. N.F.C. Ranaweera (IRRI). 1996	CBNRM, SUB, Minga, PLAW	88-0116	Asia
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Base-Line Analysis of Gender Sensitivity: Project Summaries of 1995-1996. Victoria Bromley. 1996	All	72 project abstracts, 1995-1996 (95-0800)	Global
Use of Information and Communication Technologies in IDRC projects: Lessons Learned. Michael Graham. 1997	Acacia, Bellanet, PAN, All	90-0305, 91-0064, 91-0307, 91-1043, 92-0611, 92-0616, 92-1152, 93-8480, 94-0602, 94-8008, 01269,	Global

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IDRC'S EVALUATION SYSTEM

1. WHAT IS EVALUATION?

Evaluation is systematically determining the merit, worth, or value of something. Drawing heavily, but not exclusively, on applied social science research methods, it is used to measure performance and outcomes relative to objectives and intentions.

2. WHY EVALUATE?

- enable corporate learning on how to be more effective in supporting development research;
- improve the quality and management of IDRC's projects and programs;
- identify successful cases for follow-up and utilization;
- influence policies in IDRC and in the environments in which we support research;
- contribute to the body of knowledge on what works in development research;
- document corporate performance for accountability purposes.

3. CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

The evaluation system requirements of IDRC are strongly influenced by several contextual factors:

- 3.1 IDRC has committed itself to be a results-oriented organization which learns from project and program evaluation and which shares the resulting knowledge with others;
- 3.2 Development "results" achieved through research are often long-term and require other contributors before they materialize. "Results" measurable today may be the products of research investment decisions taken ten or more years ago;
- 3.3 In a development research context "results" must be defined in terms of both product (research findings) and process (capacity building);

- 3.4 Development aid policies and the activities of donor agencies are under intense public scrutiny and financial pressure. This creates key audiences for evaluation information.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The main evaluation activities and the respective centres of responsibility are as follows:

ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBLE UNIT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> project & program monitoring and evaluation strategic evaluations program/thematic reviews corporate performance synthesis (annual evaluation report) evaluation system design, maintenance & capacity-building evaluating the evaluation system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pls, Regional Offices and Program Branch management Evaluation Unit Program Branch, Pls Evaluation Unit Evaluation Unit Internal Audit, SMC, Board

5. USERS & CLIENTS:

Users and clients may use evaluation outputs as follows:

USERS & CLIENTS	USE OF OUTPUTS
Program Branch, Pls & regional offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> for improving program design and management identification of cases for follow-up accountability to senior management & board
senior management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> for resource allocation, policy- and project-funding decisions accountability to Board, Parliament, and Auditor General of Canada
Board of Governors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> corporate performance monitoring
policy and planning group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> policy review and formulation. recommending priorities for program & strategic evaluation. review & refinement of program priorities and planning procedures.

USERS & CLIENTS	USE OF OUTPUTS
library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dissemination of evaluation publications
corporate communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • material for publishing, publicity, parliamentary briefings, and the annual report.
finance & administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • comparisons of costs with performance. • review of procedure and controls

6. SYSTEM COMPONENTS

The accompanying table (Annex A) outlines the project, program and corporate-level data collection components in IDRC's evaluation system. With the exception of the external review process, all the elements are in place and contributing to corporate performance reporting. Program evaluation is at the design stage with the PIs just getting their evaluation plans underway.

It is to be expected that the performance reporting system will evolve as the various parts of the Centre implement and participate in it. Elements will influence each other; views on the usefulness of the various components will change as we gain experience with them. The Centre will proceed therefore to test and revise the system according to what it learns from practice, and according to its evolving needs and opportunities. Below is a brief description of each component in the evaluation system.

6.1 PROJECT MONITORING

This is the responsibility of Program Staff throughout the duration of the project, and is part of established Centre practice in program management.

6.2 INTEGRAL PROJECT EVALUATION

Selectively--based on risk, size, innovative nature, or other special features of a project--an evaluation may be part of a project's design from the outset. IDRC and the partner institution collaborate in designing an ongoing evaluation which will help guide implementation of the project and measure its impact and effectiveness.

6.3 INTERIM & *EX POST* EVALUATION

On a selective basis, the Centre looks at ongoing and completed projects or groups of projects to assess future funding directions, application or dissemination potential, or impacts. These projects are deemed to be of particular importance to the program in drawing lessons for future utilization. A large proportion of Centre evaluations is of this type.

6.4 PROJECT COMPLETION REPORTS

A Project Completion Report (PCR) is required for every project over CAD100,000. It addresses basic evaluation issues such as achievement of objectives, lessons learned, capacity-building, required follow-up, dissemination of results, etc. Working with a PCR User Group, the Evaluation Unit refined this instrument and integrated it with the Centre-wide database system. The over 400 completed PCRs accessible in the database, constitute a valuable resource for monitoring corporate performance.

6.5 PROGRAM PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

PIs are responsible for planning and carrying out evaluations which serve their needs *vis-à-vis* assessing program relevance and effectiveness and which contribute to the information required for program reporting and review. With support from the Evaluation Unit, the process of planning these evaluations has been initiated in the PIs with full Centre coverage expected in the next fiscal year. The Evaluation Unit synthesizes the evaluation plans into a corporate performance report on evaluation.

6.5 STRATEGIC EVALUATION

On issues of corporate importance that cut across programs or regions, the Evaluation Unit undertakes strategic evaluations, either independently or in collaboration with other responsibility centres. Designed to codify lessons learned and contribute to corporate decision-making and policy development, these studies may involve the participation of staff members of the responsible institutions and may be led by Centre staff or by outside evaluators. Issues are selected in consultation with program and senior management and with the Policy and Planning Group. Recent studies include work on Networks, participatory research and project impacts.

NB. The interim, *ex post*, and strategic evaluations all yield evaluation reports which are available in hard-copy and on an electronic analytical database, EVIS (the Evaluation Information System).

6.7 CORPORATE PROGRAM SYNTHESIS

The Evaluation Unit prepares an annual report on corporate performance. The Annual Corporate Evaluation Report will be based on the Program initiative evaluation reports, together with strategic evaluations and relevant project evaluations. The report also synthesizes information from the PCR and EVIS database. In addition to what is reported by the responsibility centres, the report addresses issues which relate to the objectives of the Centre as a whole--for example: Canadian partnerships, institution building, networks, or case studies of development impact.

6.8 PROGRAM AND THEMATIC REVIEWS

The In-Depth Divisional Review (IDDR)--a process of cyclical divisional review put in place in 1984--no longer serves the Centre's organizational needs. The EU will develop a new review policy which will serve the Centre's results-orientation, its new program structure, and its decentralized management structures. The review cycle will be light in its demands on staff time and will be harmonized with other reporting and review mechanisms, and the CPF cycle. Reviews may include an external perspective and present both retrospective and prospective findings. The reports will be submitted to SMC for comment prior to submission to the Board.

7. PERFORMANCE REPORTING

The Centre's evaluation system produces a wide range of evaluation documentation to support internal management and decision-making, and accountability to our external constituencies including Parliament, the Canadian public and our Southern and other international partners. Much of this information is accessible through IDRC's annual report, its Website and its library.

The attached table summarizes the main components of the evaluation system.

September 30, 1997

IDRC's Evaluation System

	PROJECT				PROGRAM	CORPORATE		
	PROJECT MONITORING	INTEGRAL PROJECT EVALUATION	INTERIM/EX-POST PROJECT EVALUATION	PROJECT COMPLETION REPORTS	PROGRAM PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS	STRATEGIC EVALUATION	CORPORATE PERFORMANCE SYNTHESIS	EXTERNAL PROGRAM & THEME REVIEWS
COVERAGE	• all projects	• as required for specific projects	• selective	• all projects over \$100,000	• all program initiatives (PIs)	• topics of strategic importance to IDRC as a whole	• whole centre	• centre-wide by theme and program
TIMING	• periodic, frequency dependent on project characteristics	• within project lifetime	• during or after project completion	• < 6 months after project completion	• ongoing, 3-year planning cycle	• 2 per year	• annual	• cyclical
RESPONSIBILITY	• program officer	• program officer • project team • responsible institution	• PIs • Regional Office • Program Branch	• program officer	• PIs • Program Branch	• evaluation unit	• evaluation unit	• program branch • evaluation unit • policy & planning group • SMC
OUTPUT	• trip reports	• periodic project evaluation reports • final report	• evaluation report	• project completion report • PCR database record	• program performance reports • input to PWB submissions • progress reports to Board	• evaluation report • reports • seminars • publications	• Annual Corporate Evaluation Report	• special report to SMC & Board
USAGE	• day-to-day project mgmt. • input to later evaluation	• project mgmt. • input for progress reports to Board, program review activities	• program mgmt. • accountability • design & implementation of future projects • provide evidence of impact • available on EVIS	• corporate memory (IDRIS database) • project design • cross-project synthesis of results • mgmt. information	• program mgmt. • corporate memory • design & implementation of future projects • provide evidence of impact • senior mgmt. for resource allocation	• improve program delivery & impact • policy & procedure formulation • available on EVIS	• accountability • centre mgmt. • input to annual report	• program & centre mgmt. • input to corporate program framework
Focus	• progress, project mgmt. issues	• progress towards objectives • relevance of objectives • mgmt. issues • dev't impact measurement	• assess project efficiency, effectiveness & results	• assess project results & lessons learned • signal opportunities for follow-up	• progress towards targets • relevance, mgmt., accountability, impact • draws on project evaluations	• issues related to program delivery & impact • costs vs benefits • relevance	• relevance, mgmt, accountability, impact	• relevance, mgmt., accountability, impact • draws on project, program, & strategic evaluations